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ABSTRACT

This publication presents a range of evidence-based strategies, procedures, and models for use with culturally and linguistically diverse students with emotional and/or behavior disorders. Chapter 1 provides an overview of issues in providing services for this population in the context of the high-stakes accountability required by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. Chapter 2 considers ways to reduce bias in the identification process, including factors influencing bias and a proposed nondiscriminatory identification process. Chapter 3 gives guidance on avoiding the pitfalls of categorization and labeling, noting the need to consider the whole child and responsibilities of educators. The next chapter examines use of nontraditional, functional, and authentic assessments and urges use of a combination of formal and informal measures. The fifth chapter addresses issues of placement, including the relationship between nonrestrictive placements and effective instruction. Multidimensional intervention and instructional techniques for this population are explained in the following chapter. The final chapter offers a comprehensive support model with components of self, families, schools, communities, and governments, all incorporated into behavior management and intervention programs. (Contains approximately 100 references.) (DB)

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From the Fifth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Meeting the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with E/BD: Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

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Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Lyndal M. Bullock, Robert A. Gable, & Kristine J. Melloy, *Series Editors*

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The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, *Publisher*

About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

CCBD is an international and professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

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Foreword

Today, we find ourselves in the midst of difficult and uncertain times. Circumstances place some at greater risk than others. For example, a rapidly changing political and economic climate poses threats to children and youths who manifest noncompliance, antisocial behavior, or acting-out behavior. In addition, it is clear that recent federal legislation (i.e., No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) will have a major impact on the landscape of both general education and special education. Both of these Acts contain a number of positive provisions; however, they also have raised questions among those who serve students identified as *emotionally disturbed, behaviorally disordered,* or *emotionally and behaviorally disordered.* The long-term ramifications are difficult to predict, but there is little doubt that there will be far-reaching effects on the preparation of special education personnel, the nature and scope of programs and services they provide, and the specific population of students they serve.

In light of mounting challenges to serving children and youths with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD), it is good to know that there are a growing number of practices that have compelling empirical evidence for their effectiveness. The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) is committed to putting established practices in the hands of its members and supporting efforts to increase the quality of the education and treatment of students with E/BD and their families. The authors of this series discuss in detail a range of evidence-based strategies, procedures, and models that are appropriate for early intervention programs, public and private schools, day and residential treatment programs, correctional

facilities, and other settings in which are students with E/BD are educated.

The following seven volumes comprise the Fifth Mini-Library Series on children and adolescents with E/BD. Their content stems from the 2003 international conference sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders:

- *Critical Issues Facing Youths with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders During Transition to Adulthood* by Mary E. Morningstar and Debra Benitez
- *Inclusive Education for Children and Youths with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Enduring Challenges and Emerging Practices* by Beverley H. Johns, Eleanor C. Guetzloe, Editors, and others
- *Differentiating Curriculum and Instruction on Behalf of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Within General Education Settings* by Carol Ann Davis, Kathleen L. Lane, Kevin Sutherland, Phillip L. Gunter, R. Kenton Denny, Phillip Pickens, and Joseph Wehby
- *Educating Juveniles with Disabilities in Correctional Settings* by Joseph Calvin Gagnon and Matthew J. Mayer
- *Establishing Exemplary Personnel Preparation Programs for Teachers of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Partnerships with Schools, Parents, and Community Agencies* by Alec F. Peck, Sandy Keenan, Douglas Cheney, and Richard S. Neel
- *Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* by Festus E. Obiakor, Stephen Enwefa, Cheryl Utley, Sunday O. Obi, Nomsa Gwalla-Ogisi, and Regina Enwefa
- *Prevention and Early Intervention for Young Children at Risk for Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* by Maureen A. Conroy, Editor, and others

In putting together this series, we have relied on the knowledge and skill of a diverse group of dedicated professionals, each of whom is directly involved in the education and treatment of children and youths with emotional and behavioral disorders. We are grateful that they were willing to share their time and expertise and are confident that their work will contribute to improving the quality of intervention efforts for these students.

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Series Editors

1

Providing Services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

Overview

> The responsibility for change . . . lies with us. We must begin with ourselves not to close our minds prematurely to the novel, the surprising, the seemingly radical. This means fighting off idea assassins who rush forward to kill any new suggestion on grounds of its impracticality, while defending whatever now exists as practical, no matter how absurd, oppressive, or unworkable it may be. (Toffler, 1982, p. 443)

The words of Alvin Toffler reveal how people sometimes are quick to brush off new ideas even when they appear progressive and visionary. Our goal in this book is to provide innovative ways for working

with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). Culturally and linguistically diverse learners are frequently misidentified, misassessed, miscategorized, misplaced, and misinstructed (Obiakor, 2001b; Obiakor & Ford, 2002). It is imperative that general and special educators understand that not all behaviors that are culturally different are problem behaviors. As a result, using terms such as "bad kids," "violent students," "troublemakers," and "disordered students" for CLD students serves no purpose. More than a decade ago, Kauffman, Kameenui, Birman, and Danielson (1990) acknowledged that the race for easy solutions has taken precedence over "hard-thinking that brings about advances in theory, applications, and practice" (p. 114). Adequate services cannot be provided for CLD students with E/BD unless problems associated with misidentification, misassessment, miscategorization, misplacement, and misinstruction/misintervention are addressed (Obiakor, 2001b, 2003a, 2003b).

Problems confronting CLD students are multidimensional. And, techniques for dealing with them must be multidimensional! As Algozzine, Maheady, Sacca, O'Shea, and O'Shea (1990) pointed out, "we are not convinced that the cause of our field's condition is so promising that we cannot freely offer any medicine, even those available without prescriptions that may not as yet be doctor-tested" (p. 556). If general educators had done all the right things, special education would not have existed today. And if special educators had done all the right things, we would not have been talking about disproportionate representation or full inclusion today. Race has continued to matter in our society (West, 1993), and we acknowledge that general and special educators are a part of our complex society. Consequently, embedded in the adequate provision of services for CLD students with E/BD are the following critical questions that must be answered:

1. Do race and culture influence the identification of CLD students?
2. Do assessment tools measure what they purport to measure when they are used for CLD students? How reliable and biased are these tools?

3. Do categorical labels of CLD students reflect their capabilities?
4. Do placement options used for CLD students restrict their abilities to maximize their fullest potential?
5. Do instructional/intervention techniques take into consideration the rich backgrounds of CLD students?

The No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110) was passed in 2001. Based on this law, CLD students with E/BD would not be left behind. In other words, high-stakes accountability would pressure schools to improve expectations and get all students to learn (Day-Vines & Patton, 2003). However, this accountability pressure appears to be counterproductive for CLD students with E/BD—those whose behaviors affect their learning, and vice versa, will be excluded rather than included in the schooling process. To reach CLD students, especially those with E/BD, accountability questions should focus on the following:

1. Does a school have a neighborhood feeling?
2. Do the teachers and students of a school reflect each other's diversity?
3. Does a school climate demonstrate excellence and equity?
4. Does a school foster a sense of "goodness" or belonging?
5. Does a school welcome all students despite their racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, and learning differences, or does it expose feelings of discrimination and exclusion?
6. Does a school have enough funds to enhance its operational mission?
7. Does a school environment create opportunities and choices for all students to grow?
8. Does a school have well-organized programs to deal with students' stressors and crises?
9. Does a school have well-prepared, culturally sensitive teachers and administrators who are visionary about their understanding of the world we live in?

10. Does a school foster the comprehensive support model (CSM) that encourages the collaborative and consultative energies of students, families, schools, communities, and governments? (See Obiakor, 2003b, pp. 3–4.)

We believe CLD students with E/BD will succeed in school programs when general and special educators:

1. Consider their own personal attitudes, biases, and assumptions.
2. Value people and their languages.
3. Recognize the discrepancies between the home culture and the school culture.
4. Incorporate childrens' need for multidimensional pedagogical styles.
5. Affirm students' cultural identity.
6. Maintain realistic expectations for all students.
7. Avoid illusory conclusions about students.
8. Use assessment tools that are less biased.
9. Promote family involvement and community partnerships.
10. Make instructions relevant to children and youths.

In summary, we believe that CLD students with E/BD can succeed in school programs. To do so, they need education professionals who understand that (a) poor identification can lead to poor assessment, (b) poor assessment can lead to poor labels and categories, (c) poor labels and categories can lead to poor placement, (d) poor placement can lead to poor instruction/intervention, and (e) poor instruction/intervention can lead to more problem behaviors. In our opinion, the challenges we face on behalf of CLD students with E/BD demand a concerted effort among numerous professionals.

2 Reducing Bias in the Identification Process

How CLD students are identified affects the services they receive in school programs. To identify CLD students with E/BD, general and special education professionals must be sensitive to their needs, learning characteristics, and related concerns that can stem from the family. These professionals must be committed to the dual roles of teacher and advocate for them to properly identify CLD students. As Obiakor (2001b) argued, they must learn to talk and work with individuals from the culture, participate in the life of someone from another culture, and/or learn the language of someone from another culture. We recognize that there may be a number of barriers to service provision for these students prior to identification. Thus, school personnel must understand not only general characteristics of various cultural groups, but also the variables that interact to make each student and family unique within that cultural group (Obiakor, 2001b; Utley & Obiakor, 2001).

Factors Influencing Bias

The following factors are associated with bias in the process of identifying CLD students with E/BD:

1. *Culture.* Culture is multifaceted and influenced by many variables.

2. *Neighborhood of residence.* The neighborhood reflects the culture of the community; members of the community can act as informants and interpreters.

3. *Peer group.* Students can share important aspects of their culture with each other. Conflicts may occur because of differences between school values and peer group values.

4. *Urban versus rural background.* Background knowledge provides an in-depth view of the area the student is from and resides in. Professionals should try to identify any related barriers to the success of students in their communities.

5. *Language(s) spoken.* Such information can be gathered from local community libraries, university libraries, and persons from that particular cultural group.

6. *Socioeconomic status.* Poverty is not necessarily an indicator of dysfunction; many families living in impoverished circumstances provide nurturing and stable environments for their children; however, problems can arise from poverty.

7. *Age.* Some students experience problems adjusting to schools that are different from schools in their homeland. In some families, a specific family member may be the spokesperson. If the family believes in seniority and authority based on age, then the elder of the family may have the final say and decision-making power on behalf of the family.

8. *Gender.* In some cultures, it could be considered inappropriate for a female professional to make any kind of physical contact with the male in the family. The cultural belief system impacts some parts of the process.

9. *Religious beliefs and their impact on daily living activities.* Local religious organizations can often serve as allies for gathering information on students.

10. *Child-rearing practices.* Cultures vary with regard to child rearing. Some families may believe strongly in discipline to teach children appropriate behaviors.

11. *Education.* Education is viewed as an important step in the student's life. It brings opportunity that parents may or may not have experienced.

12. *Recreational availability.* Professionals can use music, literature, art, and history as part of the process.

13. *Community resources/support.* Networks of resources and support are usually available for the child and family; however, some barriers may exist that impact the support system for the family.

14. *Country of origin.* All cultures are unique. It is important to discover generational patterns of immigration.

A Nondiscriminatory Identification Process

In looking at the factors just listed, it is not surprising that bias can exist in the process of identifying CLD students with E/BD. To reduce or eliminate bias, the identification process should consist of the following elements:

1. Evaluation of the student's performance.
2. Ethnographic interviewing and collection of a case history.
3. Data on school social interaction problems.
4. Impressions from classroom observations per teacher.
5. Written records (e.g., school files, teacher notes, agency files).

A nondiscriminatory identification process for CLD students with E/BD involves (a) identifying the nature of the problem, (b) generating and gathering a range of alternatives and analyzing each, (c) developing some type of plan of action, (d) taking action on the problem, and (e) evaluating the action. For professionals to develop a meaningful plan, specific information must be collected. This is

done through a collaborative team effort that is variously referred to as the *teacher assistance team, teacher support team, grade-level team, teacher needs team, student planning team,* and *problem-solving team.* For the team to be successful and unbiased, there should be persons who are knowledgeable about the student's culture and language. For example, parents are an integral part of the team effort. They can be especially helpful in identifying learning problems or behavior problems stemming from flawed instruction. Drawing on the multiple perspectives of the team, education personnel attempt to address the student's difficulties by means of individualized interventions. If the interventions prove unsuccessful, then the team might explore other options.

Conclusion

We believe the identification process is critical for CLD students with E/BD because it provides the information needed to rule out cultural, socioeconomic, ecological, and environmental factors that affect students' behaviors. By conducting a thorough assessment and developing various strategies to assist the student, teacher, and parent, educators may eliminate the need for referral for special education eligibility. While it is difficult to avoid bias in the identification process, CLD students can be helped by:

1. Assigning a person to coordinate the identification process.
2. Interviewing the person who made the referral to the team.
3. Conducting a file review of the student's records (e.g., medical, physical, and health), academic records, attendance, and the number of schools attended in the past.
4. Reviewing family history and including sociocultural factors (e.g., family history, medical history, developmental history, occupations).
5. Gathering information on the student's dominant language.

6. Using ecological observations to note the effects of the student's behavior on performance.
7. Identifying types of classroom adaptations, accommodations, and modifications that are appropriate for the student.
8. Deciding on new behavioral interventions and strategies.
9. Documenting the effectiveness of the identification process and determining the time period for the measurement of the intervention.
10. Deciding, planning, and acting on the student's behalf.

3

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Categorization and Labeling

What Labels Can Do

Categorization and labeling are efforts to use words to identify or code observations. Words have the power to help or harm; they can also classify or categorize, praise or humiliate (Obiakor, 2001b). Traditionally, labels are used to classify students according to category—learning disability, emotional or behavioral disorder, speech and language impairment, mental retardation, physical impairment, gifted and talented.

Sometimes these labels create more problems than they solve, and educators overlook how labels or categories can serve to devalue students (McIntosh, 2002). General and special educators have sometimes failed to understand the power of words or labels and unwittingly use them to victimize students, some of them CLD students with E/BD. Obiakor (2001b) argued that labels and categories, when used appropriately in the instructional process, have the power to celebrate diversity, which ultimately transforms differences into strengths and opportunities for all students. Semantically, words, labels, categories, and names are effective tools for communication when they are adequately defined constructs and are understood in

the same way by everyone. Unfortunately, they have been used to determine who should be identified, tested, or placed in educational programs.

Considering the Whole Child

About three decades ago, Hobbs (1975) raised questions about the potential negative effects of the well-intended classification system. He argued that "categories and labels are powerful instruments for social regulation and control, and they are often employed for obscure, covert, or harmful purposes" (p. 11). What does this mean for CLD students with E/BD and their families? Should the system designed to promote success for all students devalue, exclude, or deny access to the same students they are supposed to protect legally? To avoid pitfalls of labeling and categorization of CLD students with E/BD, general and special education professionals must embrace ideas that reflect consideration of the whole child. According to Obiakor, Algozzine, and colleagues (2002), these professionals must:

1. Pay attention to the contextual meanings of labels and categories because they are subject to local interpretations.
2. Understand that categorical labels are neither precise nor stable.
3. Practice effective cross-cultural communication and ensure that language is not a barrier to exploring differences openly and honestly.
4. Use assessment strategies that require students to demonstrate skills and competencies that realistically represent real-world problems and situations in daily life.
5. Embrace instructional programming and intervention planning approaches that do not emphasize categorical labels.

For many years, the categorization system in special education was set up for making decisions about a student's type of disability and the type of service appropriate for that student (Obiakor, 2001b).

Accordingly, general educators came to believe that special education was not their responsibility. That divide no longer exists. Today, schools must provide appropriate programs for CLD students with E/BD to promote academic development and social success in their respective communities. Furthermore, professionals must factor in the possible effect of cultural influences on students' behaviors. Before making decisions about categorization and/or labeling, professionals must know what typical behavior is for the student's community and culture. Students with disabilities or suspected disabilities should be evaluated by schools to determine whether or not they are eligible for services and, if eligible, to determine the type of services to be provided, and by whom, while accounting for cultural diversity.

Responsibilities of Educators

Given its subjective qualities, special education categorization is far from uniform across states or regions. Indeed, students with identical characteristics can be diagnosed with disabilities in one state but not in another, and they may be reclassified when they move across state or school district lines. For many CLD students, categories and labels have become a powerful instrument for social regulation and control in public schools and society. The labels given CLD students over time remain and can follow them throughout their lifetime. Although it is true that labeling of students leads to increased funding and can serve various purposes for policymakers, stakeholders, and professionals, we must safeguard against the stigma that categorization can create (Obiakor, 2001b). Education professionals must pay attention to the potential dangers of labeling and categorization of CLD students with E/BD. In addition, they must:

1. Develop an individualized functional classification system that supports and serves the student.
2. Collect observational data in a variety of naturalistic contexts.
3. Use a dynamic, comprehensive assessment.

4. Use evaluation materials to assess multiple areas of educational needs.
5. Make sure that CLD students who truly have problems are served.
6. Incorporate ethnographic interviewing (i.e., a data-collection technique used to obtain information from the point of view of a cultural informant).
7. Focus on ways that students can be served.
8. Empower parents and community members in the process.
9. Use a strength-based approach to work with CLD students.
10. Focus on how to maximize the potential of students and not on how to label them.

Conclusion

We believe when planning programs for CLD students with E/BD, general and special education professionals must involve the student, family, and community networks. School personnel must view nonfunctional student behaviors within the family/social context of that student. No matter the terminology or classification system, or services that we use, we must expect CLD students to be successful without negative stereotypes. The challenge is to fairly evaluate and properly categorize CLD students when questions arise about services. Schools must examine carefully and, in most cases, make fundamental changes in how CLD students with E/BD are viewed.

4

Using Nontraditional, Functional, and Authentic Assessments

Assessment is a continuous process that involves the use of different materials, techniques, and tests across a variety of time periods and situations. In addition, it involves the collection and synthesis of information relevant to making decisions about problems. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to gather information. Assessment helps general and special educators to:

1. Formally document professional interpretations of assessment results.
2. Generate responsive and holistic solutions to a problem.
3. Document the effectiveness of fully implemented intervention programs in an ethical manner.
4. Provide diagnostic, formative, and summative information relative to students' problems.
5. Determine students' educational success in a program.

For CLD students with E/BD, it is important to view assessment from a problem-solving perspective (i.e., the improvement and enhancement of their educational success). Also important is the need for general and special educators to develop multidisciplinary teams to design assessment strategies and interventions that are appropriate for these students.

The Problem of Bias in Assessment

As we have argued, assessments for students with E/BD are often biased. Indeed, CLD students have different behavioral patterns that frequently result in inappropriate interpretations, classifications, and labels and dysfunctional educational programs (Obiakor & Schwenn, 1996). It is evident from current literature that the assessment process is biased against individuals whose race, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, or disability categorizes them as "different" (Enwefa, Enwefa, & Payton, 2002). A team of professionals including educators, counselors, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, and students with their parents can be involved actively in the assessment process. Therefore, assessments must be multidimensional and broad enough to include interviews, samples, observations, portfolios, criterion-referenced and other classroom-based activities (Enwefa et al., 2002; Obiakor, 2001b).

About two decades ago, Jones (1988) affirmed that standardized assessment tests fail to operationalize the constructs they measure. Jones further asserted that these tests:

1. Foster undemocratic attitudes because they are used to form homogeneous classroom groups that rigidly limit educational, vocational, economic, and other social opportunities.
2. Strictly shape school curricula and restrict educational change.
3. Are not in any way useful for instructional purposes.
4. Are occasionally conducted incompetently by professionals with no perception and recognition of the meaning of the culture and

language of diverse student groups and are therefore unable to elicit a level of performance that accurately reflects students underlying competence.

5. Are biased and unfair to individuals from culturally and socioeconomically different backgrounds. On a regular basis, they reflect White middle class values and attitudes rather than the experiential, linguistic, cognitive, and cultural values of all students.
6. Foster expectations that may be damaging by contributing to both the low self-esteem and self-fulfilling prophecy that results in low-level achievement for individuals who score low.
7. Encourage a view of human beings as having only innate, fixed abilities and characteristics.
8. Represent in some fashion an invasion of privacy.
9. Reflect the appraisal of only a part of the changes in students' school performance.

What Educators Must Do

Educationally, it is meaningless to use unreliable assessment tools to identify students with learning, social-emotional, and/or behavioral problems. Major efforts to reduce the overrepresentation of certain groups of students, specifically CLD students in special education classes, must be taken seriously (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Obiakor & Algozzine, 1995). Since assessments have become an integral part of today's educational programs, they must be multimodal. Obiakor (2001b) suggested that general and special education professionals view appropriate assessment as:

- Instructionally related and curriculum based.
- Operational and functional.
- Authentic and realistic.
- Nondiscriminatory.

- Multidimensional.
- Responsive to intraindividual and interindividual differences and styles.
- Nonjudgmental.
- Accurate, reliable, and valid.
- Responsive to observable variables.
- Ethnically and morally responsive.
- Holistic.
- Germane to culture, race, environment, and language.

Education professionals must be willing to exert considerable effort as well as take risks, lower their defenses, and set aside flawed ways of thinking. It is important that they become cognizant of their own cultural beliefs and values and those of others. This kind of reflective practice will contribute significantly to an assessment that is culturally relevant. According to Flanagan and Miranda (1985), to make assessments culturally and linguistically relevant for CLD learners, general and special educators must:

- Establish rapport and build trust with the student's family.
- Understand the family's perception of the student's problem.
- Determine the structure of the family system, including composition, roles and responsibilities, interaction patterns, support system, child-rearing practices, and beliefs about the student's disability.

Nontraditional Assessment Approaches

To better serve the diverse needs of CLD students with E/BD, assessment approaches must be nontraditional (e.g., functional, authentic, and alternative). These nontraditional assessment approaches are discussed in the following sections.

Functional Assessment

Functional assessment means different things to different people. We use the phrase to describe multiple methods of assessment such as checklists, rating scales, self-reports, interviews, and observations to identify a student's practical real-world skills and the interaction between the student's characteristics and the contexts in which he or she routinely operates (Bullis & Davis, 1999). The formal functional assessment of CLD students with E/BD often begins at the prereferral stage. The prereferral phase is a screening and intervention process that involves (a) identifying problems experienced in the classroom, (b) identifying the source of the problems (i.e., student, teacher, environment, home, curriculum), and (c) taking steps to resolve the problem in the regular classroom.

Authentic Assessment

The assessment of students' work and related outputs of their learning, commonly referred to as *authentic assessment,* has increasingly replaced or supplemented other testing procedures. Authentic assessment refers to any type of assessment task that requires students to demonstrate skills and competencies that realistically represent real-world problems and situations in daily life (Hiebert, Valencia, & Afflerback, 1994). Authentic assessment seeks to evaluate students' abilities in a real-world context. For example, its aim is to assess several different kinds of literacy activities in contexts that resemble actual situations that call for the utilization of the abilities. In other words, when engaged in authentic assessment students learn how to apply their skills to authentic tasks and projects. Authentic assessment requires students to focus on their analytical skills, ability to integrate what they learn, creativity, ability to work collaboratively, oral reading, writing samples, art, and curriculum-related projects.

Authentic assessment does not encourage rote learning and passive test taking; rather, it values the learning process as much as the finished product. Students are assessed according to specific criteria that must be known to them in advance. The rubrics used provide students with a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of

their work. In authentic assessment, educators use materials and instruction that are true representations of the actual learning and activities of the classroom and outside the school (Hiebert et al., 1994). According to Stefonek (1991), authentic assessment is characterized by:

- Meaningful tasks.
- Multiple assessments.
- Quality products.
- Higher-order thinking.
- Clear tasks and standards.
- Self-reflection.
- Transfer into life.
- Integration of knowledge.

Alternative Assessments

To address the diverse needs of a changing population of students, authorities have advocated various alternatives to formal standardized testing (Seymour & Miller-Jones, 1981; Stockman, 1986). Generally speaking, alternative assessments involve (a) adapting and revising standardized assessment instruments, (b) deleting biased test items, (c) changing bias stimuli to parallel forms that are more appropriate to the student, (d) accepting culturally appropriate responses, and (e) changing scoring to permit dialect alternatives to be considered correct (Taylor & Payne, 1983; Washington & Craig, 1992). Although alternative measures may have some limitations because of their nature, they can give concrete information about students. Following are some other alternatives for assessing CLD students with E/BD.

Informal Assessment. Informal measures include the use of questionnaires and ethnographic interviewing involving teachers, service providers, and parents. These measures help educators in (a) identifying problem areas, (b) changing the learning environment, (c) evaluating the effort needed to produce change, and (d) compar-

ing performance. Multiple observations in naturalistic contexts allow educators to evaluate student behaviors in daily situations (Cheng & Langdon, 1993).

Portfolio Assessment. This type of assessment relates to the collection of the student's work over time (e.g., writing samples; behavior log; observation from teachers, parents, and service providers). Portfolios are a means of dynamic and ongoing assessment (Tierney, 1992). They epitomize real-world assessment because they engage teachers, students, and parents in a continual process of mediated learning and self-reflection on meaningful products of the teaching/learning process.

Ethnographic Assessment. In this form of assessment, the examiner may ask family members about their own culture and attitudes. In consultation with teachers and paraprofessionals, educators can also obtain information about the student's behavior from school records, work samples, and classroom observations.

Conclusion

We believe it is best to use a combination of formal and informal measures of assessment. We cannot provide adequate services for CLD students with E/BD unless we engage in adequate assessment. We acknowledge that there is no perfect assessment tool, but we also know that we cannot continue to use tools that discriminate against the students we are supposed to help. We must begin to value the strengths and weaknesses of CLD learners. Current emphasis on accountability must not be used as a weapon to exclude those whose learning and behavior is different. Rather, we must seize this opportunity to find assessment practices that can maximize the fullest potential of all learners.

5

Making Placements Least Restrictive

We have long recognized that where students go to school is important in determining their life opportunities. Attendance at a particular school defines a student's academic world, and the associated personal relationships play a significant role in the nexus of social contacts on which social status, privilege, and power often depend. The school environment, perhaps as much as what the student learns, influences how others perceive the student and may thereby affect opportunities for future schooling and employment.

For a variety of reasons, the "where" of education has become a preoccupation of educators in the United States. This preoccupation with place has sometimes led to neglect of the "what"—content, curriculum, and what transpires between teacher and student—of both general and special education (see Edgar & Polloway, 1994; Zigler, Hodapp, & Edison, 1990). Locations and placements are issues with very strong emotional components. *Place* involves connotations of power, privilege, identity, and belonging, and it is thus a central issue in perceptions of merit, fairness, civil rights, and opportunity (Obiakor, 2001b).

Notwithstanding the U.S. ideals of equal opportunity and meritocracy, public schooling has a history of discrimination against students who differ in nonacademic areas (i.e., race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status) from those who are privileged. Preferred or

privileged places of learning have not been accessible solely on the basis of academic merit; rather, they have been available mostly to those who are already among the social and economic elite (Kozol, 1991). Similarly, issues of "place" in special education have involved discrimination against minorities and others placed at a disadvantage by society (Gallagher, 1994; MacMillan, Semmel, & Gerber, 1994; Semmel, Gerber, & MacMillan, 1994). For CLD children with E/BD, alternative placement options have been devised to address the failure of conventional programs to deal with these students effectively and humanely. Too often these placements have been extremely restrictive, thereby hampering students' ability to excel in school (Obiakor & Ford, 2002; Utley & Obiakor, 2001).

Throughout the history of programs for children with E/BD, the general purposes of placement have been to control or create a social ecology conducive to appropriate behavior and the mental health of children, families, and communities from which they are removed or in which they are kept. These purposes include (a) protecting others (i.e., family, community, schoolmates); (b) protecting children from themselves or others; (c) instructing children in academics and other life skills as well as appropriate emotional responses, attitudes, and conduct; (d) educating children's families or teachers and peers in order to provide a more supportive environment; (e) keeping children available and amenable to therapies such as psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, or behavior therapy; and (f) providing opportunity for observation and assessment of children's behavior and its contexts (Kauffman & Lloyd, 1995). The pursuit of any or all of these goals requires altering children's social environment in two ways: (a) injecting necessary and sufficient services into the places in which the children live and (b) moving children to or keeping them in the places where these services can be delivered most reliably, effectively, and efficiently (Morse, 1985; Redl, 1966).

Controversy about placement begins with the answers to these two questions: What services are necessary and sufficient to resolve the student's difficulties? Where can these services be delivered with greatest reliability at the lowest cost? In special education and related fields, there is little agreement regarding what is required

to address students' problems—the "what" of intervention. Even with consensus about what is needed, there often is little agreement about where intervention is best accomplished (Kauffman & Lloyd, 1995).

Cultural Disconnect and Placement Issues

At this juncture, some historical facts are clear regarding the placement of CLD students. First, a disproportionate number of CLD children are diagnosed as having a disability (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). This fact raises important questions concerning assessment and placement practices (Benavides, 1988). Second, if teachers and other professionals working with CLD students and their parents are to be effective, they must have a solid understanding of the cultural background of the children they are teaching. Without that cultural appreciation, many misunderstandings take place. Ford (1992), Grossman (1990), and Utley and Obiakor (2001) suggested that teachers working with CLD children with special needs have to explore their own attitudes toward various cultures. Teachers also require accurate information regarding the values, communication patterns, and parental attitudes toward disabilities and schooling. In addition, they must understand interactions that are effective and apply multicultural perspectives to special education concerns.

There is reason to believe that there is too little appreciation of and tolerance for cultural differences among general and special educators (Ford, 1992; Obiakor & Ford, 2002). To some, the "three strikes and you're out" approach is the order of the day. These educators sometimes expect students to adopt majority cultural behaviors overnight. Many years ago, Dent (1976) noted that "the teacher's expectation is that the student should be compliant, docile, and responsive to authority. The student is expected to conform to a standard of behavior that the teacher is familiar with, the compliant child standard that was indicative of the teacher's upbringing" (p. 178).

Understandably, students who belong to some culturally and linguistically diverse groups have experienced a long history of discrimination and powerlessness. Their relationships with the dominant group are less than satisfying. They are also more likely to have a culture that does not match the values, structure, and instructional techniques used in schools. Their differences in expression, behavior, culture, and language are often seen as deficits rather than differences, creating an atmosphere that sometimes lacks respect (Obiakor, 2001b; Obiakor & Ford, 2002; Poplin & Wright, 1983). Many immigrants find themselves in an alien culture whose values and procedures are different from those they remember in their native land. Not surprisingly, adjusting to these changes is very difficult (Kaplan, 1996). Is it any wonder that CLD students are disproportionately placed in special education programs?

Appropriate Placement: The Heart of Service Delivery

As we reassess how general and special educators do their jobs, we must be aware of problems associated with classroom placements of all students. Appropriate placements should be environments in which students' cultures and languages do not result in misidentification, misassessment, miscategorization, and misintervention. We cannot pretend that race does not matter in our perceptions of students or that we do not see colors or hear languages. The heart of appropriate service delivery is an appropriate nondiscriminatory placement. Placement can never be appropriate if it discriminates exclusively and disproportionately. Whether or not full inclusion is an illusion (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995), the heart and soul of quality service delivery for students is nonrestrictive placements and settings. Inclusion creates opportunities for students to be taught through collaborative endeavors of professionals representing various disciplines. Because inappropriate placements do not occur in isolation, it is imperative that we understand how our behaviors are related to inappropriate identifications, assessments,

labels, categories, and interventions. Times are changing, and our practices must change as well.

It is important to consider whether students with E/BD can be educated in least restrictive environments that allow their unique needs to be met (Smith, 1998; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2000). In fact, the least restrictive environment (LRE) can provide opportunities for students' academic, social, and emotional development to be maximized. As Smith pointed out:

> LRE is an important concept. Special [and all] educators must be constantly aware of how placement decisions can segregate students by removing them from normal role models, social interactions, and curriculum—and can fragment their daily lives. Placement decisions further identify a student as being different. Finally, removing a child from the general education classroom has serious implications for today and the future. If, however, the student's needs cannot be met in the general classroom or if that environment impedes learning, then placement there is not appropriate. (p. 60)

Whether a CLD student is misplaced in a gifted program or a special education program, the effects can be devastating. These two placement options frequently result in unrealistic expectations, prejudicial generalizations, illusory conclusions, and deceptive self-aggrandizement or self-hate.

The question remains, Where should CLD students with E/BD be educated? They should be educated in nonrestrictive environments that maximize their potential. In other words, they should be placed in environments that are culturally, linguistically, racially, and socioeconomically accepting. Central to the idea of inclusion is where to deliver instruction to CLD students with E/BD. To comply with federal laws and assure each student that his or her rights are protected, placement decisions must be (a) individualized, (b) based on the full continuum of alternative placements, (c) consistent with the principles of the LRE, and (d) focused on providing appropriate educational programming.

The Relationship Between Nonrestrictive Placements and Effective Instruction

Effective instruction is the first line of defense for addressing student behavior problems (Kauffman, 2001). Nonrestrictive environments are important for all students and are especially critical for students who often come to school unprepared for the ambiguous rules and communication styles typical of middle-class schools (Delpit, 1988, 1995). General and special education teachers who fail to structure their classroom and academic day not only run the risk of losing valuable instructional time, but also invariably encounter increases in disruptive pupil behaviors. As it appears, poor and CLD children present the greatest educational need; however, they are least likely to be recipients of effective instruction (Haycock, 2001). Interestingly, a reciprocal relationship appears to exist between academics and social behavior. Put another way, good instruction minimizes behavior problems (Armendariz & Umbreit, 1999), and socially appropriate students experience higher academic achievement (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995). Poor instructional environments contribute to disruptive behaviors and must be eliminated if we are to serve CLD students with E/BD adequately.

General and special education teachers play a critical role in creating culturally responsive school environments where CLD learners feel safe or unrestricted and where learning takes place. Such school environments have strong principals, small student–teacher ratios, fair discipline policies that are clearly stated and consistently implemented, teachers with realistic expectations for every student, and an ongoing effort to consistently include parents in the educational process (Kea, Cartledge, & Bowman, 2002). The goal is to affirm and motivate students who have been demoralized by failure. In addition, we can strive to prevent behavior problems by ensuring that culturally responsive instruction, curricula, and instructional materials are implemented, along with teaching students how to manage conflict and anger. Apparently, in culturally responsive

schools, behavior management techniques reflect students' cultural backgrounds (see Kea et al., 2002; Obiakor, 2001b, 2003a, 2003b).

The era of the inclusive nonrestrictive classroom has come to stay; and it will increasingly become the tradition rather than the exception (Murdick & Petch-Hogan, 1996). It is imperative that teachers become cognizant of management strategies that will allow CLD students to succeed. In fact, educators who wish to become effective classroom managers in nonrestrictive classrooms should be prepared to address the issue of classroom discipline before disruptions occur. Planning and implementing preintervention strategies can help teachers to create a learning climate or environment in which there is trust and in which CLD students with E/BD believe they can learn (Evans, Evans, Gable, & Schmid, 1991). Again, when learning occurs, the number of classroom disruptions decrease.

Conclusion

We believe strongly that instructional environments matter. To develop a positive self-identity, young people need opportunities to exercise and express choices about friendships and group affiliations. An inclusive learning community cannot succeed unless it is flexible, adaptive, and sensitive to the unique needs of all its members, including CLD students. Purposeful access can introduce these qualities into the mainstream by allowing each individual an opportunity to develop a positive sense of identity. Although by no means a simple undertaking, schools can become places where purposeful access groups are facilitated and where each CLD student with E/BD is given the opportunity to develop positive feelings about the unique qualities he or she brings to the educational community. After all, the goal of an inclusive, nonrestrictive environment is not to erase differences, but to enable all students to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individualities. It is critical that the voices of CLD students with E/BD be heard. One way to ensure that these voices are heard is to provide

them with opportunities to meet together, form friendships among themselves, generate allies across groups, and learn to take charge of their education and their lives (Stainback, Stainback, East, & Sapon-Shevin, 1994).

6

Practicing Multidimensional Intervention and Instructional Techniques

By most accounts, CLD students continue to be overrepresented in special education programs, especially in programs for those with E/BD (Obiakor, Algozzine et al., 2002; Webb-Johnson, 1999). As it appears, these students are not as successful as their peers in academic achievement, job placements, and/or interpersonal relationships because their behaviors significantly interfere with their learning and performance into adulthood. They often exhibit behaviors that do not lead to success or allow them to contribute positively to society. Many of these students are not able to display and maintain appropriate social relationships with school staff, peers, family, or community members, and many engage in aggressive, noncompliant, disrespectful behaviors toward authority figures. These inappropriate behaviors often lead to removal from classes and the loss of valuable instruction, which results in the student's falling further behind in academic skill development. Since many of these learners chronically exhibit challenging behaviors, they are often placed in more restrictive educational settings than other students with disabilities (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003; Heiss, Gwalla-Ogisi, & Hall, 2001).

The problems of many CLD students with E/BD are exacerbated by their learned distrust of the oppressive systems within which they are socialized—some by the realities of living in the culture of poverty and some by living in abusive settings. This socialization results in ways of seeing the world that produce defiant, resistive, and aggressive behaviors (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003; Porter, 1997; Webb-Johnson, 1999). These often counterproductive views tend to affect how CLD students perform and adjust to life outside the school. As a consequence, it behooves school personnel who plan programs and interventions for CLD learners to weigh and consider these variables carefully when planning meaningful and relevant interventions.

Intervention for What? Serving the Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

The goal of working with students with E/BD is to provide them with the tools and skills that will help them mediate diverse environments. Simply put, the idea is to help young people to pursue successful adult lives. To help CLD students with E/BD experience success in school and achieve better employment and social relationship outcomes, it is imperative that schools design more responsive programs and more varied curricula—multidimensional and culturally competent interventions that address the historical and sociopolitical realities contributing to their problems.

Artiles (1998), Artiles and Trent (1994), and Obiakor, Algozzine, and colleagues (2002) suggested that meaningful programs and interventions for CLD students will have to address perceptions of oppression, silenced voices, invisibility, helplessness, and hopelessness. Furthermore, experiences produced by the challenging family systems and culture of poverty that these students live in have to be considered. Use of appropriate teaching strategies will help these students articulate their perceptions of the world, expand their

worldviews, and guide their thinking and decision making. Many interventions that are currently used with CLD students with E/BD do not seem to provide them with the tools and skills needed throughout life. Some produce short-term results within the school setting but fail to provide ongoing skill development that promotes academic as well as social success.

To maximize the learning potential of CLD students with E/BD, general and special educators, practitioners, and service providers must be innovative and visionary. Proactive efforts must be taken to (a) provide caring environments, (b) build reclaiming learning environments, (c) use diverse cultural variables, and (d) use positive behavioral supports.

Providing Caring Environments

The first consideration in intervening successfully with CLD learners with E/BD is to create the kind of environment that is conducive to learning, culturally responsive, and caring. According to Heiss and colleagues (2001), it is important to create a "Circle of Courage" to increase a caring framework for each child. For instance, there are values that enhance positive educational cultures. These values include creating a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity, which are derived from values honored by culturally diverse communities as central to their livelihood. These values should guide teachers' thinking as they plan and create caring classroom communities for all learners.

Goleman (1995) and Jensen (1995) argued that all learning is emotionally based. This means that when presented with learning experiences, CLD children listen for the feeling first, before the concepts; that is, emotions are the initial filter before cognition. When these children are thrust in an environment they perceive as threatening, they become preoccupied with issues of belonging rather than learning whatever content the teacher has planned. Earlier, Bronfenbrenner (1986) stated that "to be alienated is to lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from the family, friends, school or work—the four worlds of childhood" (p. 430).

There are myriad curricula and activities that promote positive learning communities and environments. Freire (1997) and Obiakor, Algozzine, and colleagues (2002) proposed that building a community of learning has to go beyond attempting to make CLD students "fit in" by imitating other youths who are depicted as "successful" based on White, middle-class values. This expectation makes these students judge their worth and value against a reality they cannot measure up to, and they then become their own worst enemies. Most CLD youths rebel, give up, and become helpless, hopeless, and alienated as they see a "mirror" of themselves that they view as marginal. To become more responsive and truly create an environment of belonging for CLD youths with E/BD, the learning community must be structured around liberating concepts that enable students to survive their communities, but also to learn skills they need to mediate the school, work, and other community environments. General and special education teachers and professionals must learn to use language, provide examples, and offer activities that welcome students with diverse attitudes and understandings.

Building Reclaiming Learning Environments

To work with CLD students with E/BD, general and special educators must make environments peaceful and psychologically safe. Despite the pressure to prepare students for tests, meet state standards, and cover the breadth of the curriculum, teachers must first create the kind of classroom climate in which all learners will be "connected" or "belong" and remove the threats that interfere with learning (Amen, 1998; Jensen, 1995). For example, students could collaboratively create a classroom Bill of Rights that spells out how class members will interact in ways that honor each other. Class meetings could be held weekly to review class agreements and solve problems. This proactive kind of programming, while time consuming, pays off because students are less likely to act out and disrupt instruction.

To build reclaiming learning environments, general and special education professionals can plan welcoming activities. They may set up a welcome team composed of CLD upper-class students who have

been around the school and community and instructed on how to serve in this role. The welcome teams should guide new students who enter the school or community to support their social, academic, and emotional adjustment. The teams might meet with students once a week and collaboratively plan and schedule co-curricula activities, social networking, and strategies for survival within the informal peer system. Each team member becomes an individual mentor to two or three students in addition to team activities. The team members and mentors receive volunteer credit for serving in this role and are celebrated each year by the community, student body, and staff in a school-wide recognition party. High schools often have what they call "Smooth Transitions Peer Committees" designed to facilitate academic and personal adjustment for incoming CLD freshmen and students who have moved into the school district.

Using Diverse Cultural Variables to Create Learning Communities

Interventions and instructions must be multidimensional and culturally responsive to achieve their goals. General and special education practitioners can teach students about group development and dynamics. The Emotional Literacy (Schilling, 1996) and Partners for Change (Kehayan, 1992) curricula provide student-centered, diverse activities that teachers and service providers can use and without having to reinvent the wheel. These activities help students learn to read and interpret other people's nonverbal behavior and anticipate and plan for potential challenges in interactions. CLD students can create a collage of things they value. Given a list of things or words that describe people's characteristics, values, and beliefs, they can check those they think are most like them. It is important to note that teachers and service providers can modify this activity to allow CLD students to share who they are without judgment. To make this process meaningful, these professionals may have CLD students:

1. Make a list of people around them who can be and are resources. For instance, a program developed by Walker (1985) for a 4H

Youth Development Project in Minnesota has wonderful activities in this area, as does the emotional intelligence curriculum by Schilling (1996).

2. Complete projects that require them to interview family members and community members to find out about how conflicts are resolved in their cultures and what kinds of arts, music, poetry, heroes, ceremonies, and beliefs are valued in their cultural or ethnic groups and bring these to school.

3. Engage in activities that help them explore racial, cultural, family, gender, and class identities. It is important to help them to examine and recognize stereotypes about the different identities and how they will counteract and deal with them as they interact with each other.

4. Understand divergent cultural and personal boundaries and help them establish boundaries that can guide them in their relationships.

Using Positive Behavioral Supports

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 mandated schools to develop behavioral intervention plans and supports (BIPS) for all students who exhibit problematic behaviors that interfere with their learning or that of their peers. In the context of this process, the use of positive behavioral support was highlighted (Public Policy Unit, 1998; Sadler, 2000). Since then, the concept has become more widespread as school districts across the country attempt to implement these regulations. Apparently, these mandates are intended to motivate professionals and service providers to explore other ways of addressing the needs of CLD students with E/BD instead of the coercive and punitive techniques that fail to yield permanent positive results (Jackson & Panyan, 2002; Kohn, 1993; Sadler, 2000; Webb-Johnson, 1999). For instance, Jackson and Panyan warned that "values and processes of support are neither honored nor implemented" when children and youths with E/BD are "micro-managed through systems of rewards and punishments that support little more than adults' comfort levels" (p. 79). In addition, they proposed interventions that are (a) behaviorally supportive, (b)

student centered, (c) geared toward relationship development, (d) hypothesis based, and (e) tied to strategies that manage crises. To develop behaviorally supportive interventions for CLD students with E/BD, general and special educators and related professionals must:

1. Build social relationships between CLD students and authority figures.
2. Develop "peer helping peer" programs.
3. Teach cooperative group work.
4. Help students develop work-related social skills.
5. Promote independence.
6. Prevent and respond to addictive behaviors.
7. Plan and modify inclusive curricula.

When working with these students, teachers and related professionals must use teaching techniques that cater to their learning styles and ensure that they apply concepts and practice skills on a variety of materials and situations.

Teaching children from a one-dimensional European-American perspective creates alienation and confusion for those with conflicting life experiences. Therefore, curriculum planning for CLD students with E/BD must involve searching for alternatives to mainstream texts and resources. Instruction can be enhanced when general and special educators use stories, folk literature, art, and music, as well as experiences from many cultures to introduce units or illustrate concepts. The following are just a few examples of resources to draw from:

- *Women in American History:* http://search.eb.com/women/
- *Living the Legacy:* http://www.legacy98.org/
- *Disability art / National Disability Arts Forum:* www.ndaf.org
- *Multicultural folktales:* http://www.weigl.com/WEPLIB08.HTM

- *Hispanic:* http://www.slco.lib.ut.us/hispanic-legends-bib.htm
- *African Americans in the sciences:* http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/faces.html.
- *African American history:* http://www.toptags.com/aama/links/links.htm
- *Index of Native American resources on the Internet:* www.hanksville.org/NAresources

It is important to find diverse voices that are rarely heard in schools (e.g., people in poverty, immigrants, people with disabilities, veterans, staff from state hospitals, social workers). These voices must be incorporated in program design and implementation. Not only will this type of inclusion affect curricula for all students, it will also provide opportunities to discuss individual differences and, hopefully, redefine conflicts and resolutions. Instructional activities provide opportunities to make content meaningful and help students care about learning.

To ensure that CLD students with E/BD are connected to the content, general and special education teachers need to allow them to brainstorm what they know about a topic or group—then immediately support their contribution while addressing misinformation. In addition, teachers must (a) initiate discussion about differing perspectives; (b) have students tell stories about their families, customs, or history; (c) provide opportunities for the group to compare stories and discover the universal needs for belonging, celebration, and success; (d) deliberately study many historical responses to social change or oppression; and (e) have students support or refute commonly held beliefs. It is imperative to tap the learning styles and interests of diverse students by differentiating instruction (Renzulli, Leppien, & Hays, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999).

Conclusion

We are convinced that many CLD students with E/BD are socialized in environments of servitude or are in relationships in which they feel used and, as a result, may adopt narcissistic behaviors. If that is the case, general and special education teachers must engage those students in activities that allow them to help others in ways that engender a sense of joy and connectedness. In our view, to nurture caring and altruism in students, programs need to include service learning projects (Gibbs, 1994; Perlstein & Thrall, 1996). These projects are powerful ways to get CLD students with E/BD to engage in healthy behaviors. Service learning projects could include such activities as (a) mowing yards for senior citizens in the summer, (b) shoveling snow for them in the winter, (c) spending time visiting and playing games with senior citizens in nursing homes, (d) working with the parks and recreation department to clean the park, (e) supervising young children at play, (f) serving as mentors to others, (g) participating in Habitat for Humanity projects, and (h) volunteering in homeless shelters. We believe schools have a responsibility to plan curricula and to use culturally responsive strategies to promote emotional development, social interaction, and academic success for CLD students with E/BD.

7

Using the Comprehensive Support Model to Foster Services

Notwithstanding the belief that current demographic changes have highlighted the need to link a wide range of services across school/family/community boundaries, American children, particularly CLD students with E/BD, continue to lack the comprehensive services and supports they need. Gerry (2002) remarked that "adverse effects on learning have been manifested by disrupted school attendance, impaired classroom concentration, the erosion of self-confidence and self-concept, and the eradication of hope" (p. 63). In this rapidly changing society, new intervention paradigms and models must be developed and implemented to increase appropriate behaviors and decrease inappropriate behaviors in schools. To respond to behavioral and societal complexities, schools must revamp their behavior management practices to facilitate a comprehensive approach that operationally integrates efforts of the self (i.e., learner), families, schools, communities, and government agencies (Obiakor, 1994, 2001a, 2001b, 2003b; Obiakor, Algozzine et al., 2002; Obiakor, Utley, Smith, & Harris-Obiakor, 2002). For school-linked behavior management services to be effective, these organizations must work collaboratively to expand infrastructures of support and services for all CLD children, especially those with behavior prob-

lems. The time has come to pursue a more innovative behavior management system in which family/school partnerships are formed.

With legislative reforms (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) and technological advances, it would seem that longstanding educational problems (e.g., prejudicial assessment, expectation, categorization, placement of CLD students with behavior problems) would have been resolved. Unfortunately, there is ample evidence to suggest that inequalities continue to exist in the ways that most educational problems are dealt with (Boykin, 2000; Kozol, 1991; Obiakor, 1999a, 1999b, 2001a, 2001b; Obiakor, Harris-Obiakor, Obi, & Eskay, 2000; Obiakor, Utley, & Rotatori, 2003; Utley & Obiakor, 2001). To educate and empower CLD students with E/BD in the 21st century, we advocate that the schools explore a comprehensive support model (CSM).

The Comprehensive Support Model as an Operational Behavior Intervention Model

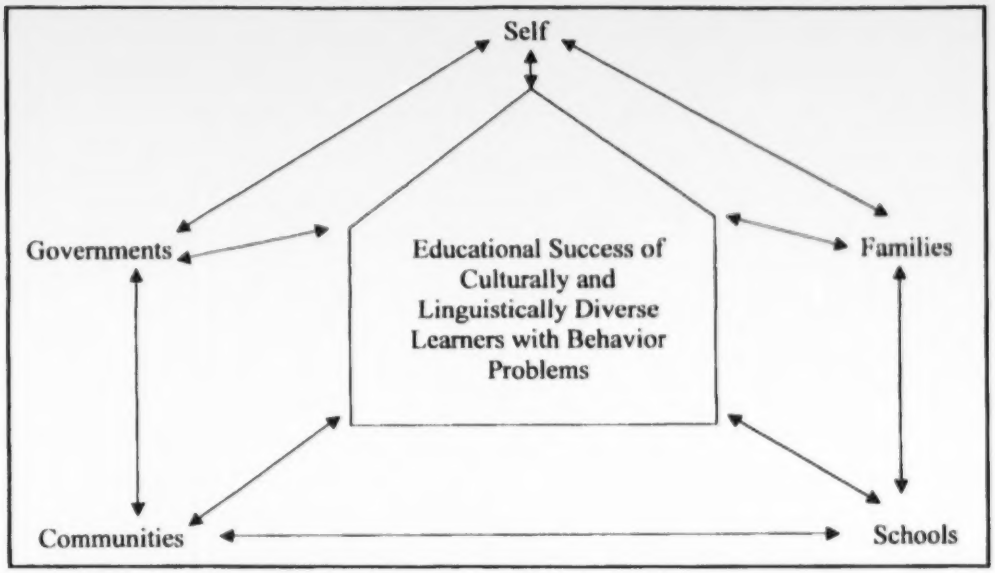
With the multidimensional nature of problems that confront CLD students with E/BD, it seems logical to tackle these problems in an integrative manner that combines collaborative strategies with multifaceted interventions. Based on the CSM, the self (i.e., CLD learner), family, school, community, and government are collaboratively involved in managing behavior problems (Obiakor, 1994). The self is involved because without the personal powers of CLD students involved in learning, self-responsibility may not be maximized. The family is important because it is the cornerstone of the CLD student and the bridge that connects the learner with the school. The school is a part of the CSM because it has general and special education teachers and other professionals who have the power to shift their paradigms. The community is an important part of the CSM because it provides a variety of opportunities and choices for CLD children and youths with E/BD, their parents, and schools. In addition, local, state, and federal governments are impor-

tant because they generate equitable policies that strengthen the multiple voices of culturally diverse citizens (Obiakor, 2001b; Obiakor et al., 2000, Obiakor, Algozzine et al., 2002). Major elements of management and intervention include:

1. Development and use of multidimensional intervention strategies that function within the framework of cultural competence.
2. Creation of a collaborative system of community support for CLD families whose youngsters exhibit behavior problems.
3. Development of, recognition of, and appreciation for the behavioral patterns exhibited by children and youth, and human differences and strengths.
4. Thwarting of conditions leading to violence or problems in the home and community to cultivate a sense of safety for CLD children and families.
5. Promotion of culturally competent practices in schools and in the larger society that respect differences in worldviews and learning patterns among individuals.
6. Advocacy for expanded services providing affordable quality child care to meet the varied needs of all families and children (e.g., infant and adolescent 24-hour care, weekend care).
7. Development of collaborative community approaches to problem solving involving students, parents, schools, and community leaders.
8. Reconfiguration of curricula to eliminate culturally insensitive components.
9. Reinstitution of rites of passage and service opportunities to cultivate a sense of belonging and resiliency in CLD youths.
10. A broadening of vision in educational reform to include economic reform and investment in human capital.

As discussed earlier, the CSM enhances reciprocity and creates a win-win situation for everyone involved in the processes of increasing appropriate behaviors and decreasing inappropriate behaviors.

Figure 1. The Comprehensive Support Model



Source: Obiakor (1994).

The CSM is shown in Figure 1. Evidently, the components of the CSM are inextricably interwoven; however, the isolation of each category is designed to affirm that there is accountability on each level of the intervention/management process.

The Self and Behavior Intervention

The self is powerful, CLD students with EB/D can be stimulated, inspired, and taught to manage their own behavior. For this to happen, the school or society must believe in them. These students must be helped to be responsive to the environment by knowing how to act appropriately and take proactive steps to maximize their potential. Interestingly, the CSM encourages CLD students with E/BD to be active, motivated, and responsible members of the support system to benefit from behavior management and intervention processes. The students must demonstrate attitudes of self-efficacy. Few interventions will be successful unless students are involved in the process (Glasser, 1986; Obiakor, Mehring, & Schwenn, 1997) but even with a great support system, CLD students with E/BD must be

self-knowledgeable, self-loving, and self-empowered (Obiakor, 1998, 1999b). As a consequence, teachers, families, and community members must create success-oriented environments in which opportunities and choices flourish for these students.

Families and Behavior Intervention

We agree that the family serves as the bridge that connects the student with the school (Strickland & Ascher, 1992). It is essential that the family participates in schools, classrooms, sporting events, field trips, school performances, and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings to maximize the potential of CLD students, especially those who are at risk of being misidentified and/or are having problems. When the family is actively involved in school, behavioral problems can more likely be handled expeditiously. Comprehensive programs of prevention and intervention can be collaboratively developed with the goal being to increase learning outcomes (Harry, 1995; Prater & Ivarie, 1999).

Schools and Behavior Intervention

The choice of curriculum, instruction, and discipline styles can make the difference between success and failure of CLD students with E/BD. In many cases, these students are taught using teaching styles that are Eurocentric and neither match nor maximize educational outcomes (Goor & Porter, 1999). It is no surprise that CLD students are overrepresented in special education programs (e.g., serious emotionally disturbed) and underrepresented in programs for students with gifts and talents (Artiles, 1998; Ford, 1998). Various authorities attribute these disproportionate numbers to Eurocentric interpretations and sometimes illusory conclusions regarding students (Chang, Lai, & Shimizu, 1999).

Shortly after the Supreme Court decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, teacher preparation programs began to look for ways to educate all learners (Ladson-Billings, 1994,

1995). That need still exists. Few institutions of higher education offer coursework that is responsive to changing demographics or equip teachers with multicultural pedagogical techniques. General and special educators must be willing to change as well and learn to reach out to CLD families and communities.

As for the school, it must keep its pulse on community and family activities, especially as they become increasingly diverse. By drawing on the resources of people from the home and community, schools can reduce cultural ignorance, foster more positive working relationships, and provide a learning environment that facilitates success for CLD children and youths with E/BD.

Community and Behavior Intervention

The community is a macrocosm of the family. This relationship has been described not only as intertwined, but reciprocal (Watts-Jones, 1997). A neighborhood without a positive foundation lacks expectations, obligations, or a moral code (Wilson, 1996). Unfortunately, the connection between the environment and the school is often overlooked in discussions about reform and improvement (Noguera, 1996). Even so, neighborhoods and communities can have a great impact on determining the academic achievement, depression level, emotional development, social behavior, and self-esteem of CLD students.

We believe building proactive community/school linkages begins with strengthening community capacity. Fundamental to this process are (a) a sense of community, (b) a high level of commitment among community members, (c) the ability to solve problems, and (d) access to resources (Chaskin, 2000; Dooley & Toscano-Nixon, 2002). To assist CLD students with E/BD to reach their potential in the community, the environment must be restructured to develop important human capital by providing students with both opportunities and choices. The focus should be on how to provide educational and

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employment opportunities for CLD children and youths that strengthen their capacity to be successful in the larger community.

Government and Behavior Intervention

The landmark Supreme Court case of *Plessey v. Ferguson* in 1896 mandated that races could be separated as long as facilities for each group were commensurate. During this era, known by many as the Jim Crow era, there was blatant disregard for the law because institutions were separate but unequal. In 1954, *Plessey v. Ferguson* was ruled unconstitutional by the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, which led the initiative to desegregate public schools. Many exemplary litigations (e.g., *Hobson v. Hanson* in 1967, *Diana v. State Board of Education of California* in 1970, *Larry P. v. Riles* in 1972) have helped to foster equality in educational programming for students who believe and learn differently. Similarly, important legislative mandates have been promulgated by the government to enhance possibilities for a free and appropriate education for all learners. Though these legislative efforts are progressive and helpful, they are not in themselves the solution for CLD students with E/BD. The spirit of these laws has been ignored sometimes, and as a consequence, inequalities continue to exist in many of today's schools (Kozol, 1991). Too often, there is a "three strikes and you're out" policy.

Local, state, and federal governments must enforce laws that prohibit discriminatory treatments and violations of civil rights. While it is big business to build more jails, obtaining funding for rehabilitation programs continues to be a problem at the local, state, and federal levels. Quality education is important to all Americans, and government must support the legislation that has been passed to ensure equality for all. The CSM model acknowledges the role of government in fighting injustices and enhancing educational *equality* and *quality* for all learners, including those with different behavioral and learning patterns (see Obiakor, 1994).

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Incorporating Wraparound Services into the Comprehensive Support Model

As general and special education professionals attempt to understand the growing number of problems in the schools, integrated service delivery models have emerged as the means to provide comprehensive services to meet the needs of families of children with E/BD. According to Zollers (2002), acknowledging social class and cultural differences and improving consumer empowerment are methods agencies use to achieve the integrated services approach. The concept of wraparound services is aimed at (a) describing flexible funding mechanisms to support families and (b) increasing the power of families to assert their needs. The wraparound service model is a viable approach that can be articulated and incorporated into the CSM framework.

The wraparound service model is based on an ecological perspective focusing on what occurs in the context of interactions between the child and his or her environment and how to increase the community forces that support the strengths of the family (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 1999). Key principles of wraparound services include the following:

1. Programs must be community based.
2. Services and supports must be individualized, be built on strengths, and meet the needs of children and families to promote success, safety, and permanence in home, school, and community.
3. The process must be culturally responsive, building on the unique values, preferences, and strengths of children, their families, and their communities.
4. Families must be full and active partners in every level of the wraparound process.

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5. Programs must be team driven to involve the family, child, natural supports, agencies, and community services working together to develop, implement, and evaluate the individualized service plan.
6. Child and family teams must have flexible approaches and funding options.
7. Program plans must include a balance of formal services and involvement of informal community and family resources.
8. An unconditional commitment to serve children and families is essential.
9. Programs must be developed and implemented based on interagency, community-based collaboration.
10. Program outcomes must be determined and measured for the system and for the individual child and family.

In addition, successful implementation of wraparound services must be rooted in the following best practices:

1. A structure that supports community collaboration.
2 Sound administrative and management organization.
3. Effective referral mechanisms.
4. Resource coordinators to facilitate the process.
5. A strengths and needs assessment.
6. Formation of a child and family team.
7. An interactive team process by which to develop an individualized plan.
8. Existence of a crisis/safety plan.
9. Measurable outcomes that are monitored on a regular basis.
10. Review of plans by persons operating within the community.

Conclusion

We believe the CSM fosters school/family/community partnerships to meet the diverse needs of families of children with E/BD. Closely related is the wraparound service model, which is predicated on strong collaboration and consultation among stakeholders. Accordingly, general and special educators, school counselors, and school/home/community liaison personnel are key individuals who play an active, ongoing role in helping schools establish and maintain connections with significant community resources (SCRs) (Ford & Reynolds, 2001; McGee-Banks, 1997; Obiakor 2001a, 2001b; Obiakor, Algozzine et al., 2002; Obiakor & Ford, 2002; Obiakor, Grant, & Dooley, 2002). Community leaders can assist school personnel to (a) reinforce school-related skills; (b) improve family/school relationships; (c) serve as adult role models, mentors, and advocates; (d) create community and family-friendly school environments; and (e) disseminate information.

Components of the CSM must be incorporated into behavior management and intervention programs for CLD students with E/BD. Families, both traditional and nontraditional, must be acknowledged as key stakeholders in the planning of educational services to meet the special needs of their children. School personnel may find it useful to align themselves with family advocates whose primary work would be to forge educational partnerships with students and the greater community. At the same time, pressure should be applied to local, state, and federal governments to provide adequate funding and to hold institutions accountable to ensure that all our children receive a high-quality and appropriate education. In the end, a quality education must be provided in an atmosphere that reflects respect for the family of CLD students with E/BD and for the larger community.

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